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CURRENT OPINION

Politics Out of Office

Under this striking title Professor E. E. Hale, Jr., in the *Reformed Church Review* of recent issue, discusses the political duties and functions of the educated classes. George William Curtis in his day felt compelled to apologize for mentioning the American scholar in his relation to American topics and times, but today the writer of this suggestive article feels that the subject is a truism. However, in a fresh and inspiring manner he goes on to suggest that an exhortation to think of politics out of office might be addressed to a very large number of American citizens today without finding those who could claim to be beyond the need of such an exhortation.

For politics and public office are too closely connected in America in the public mind. True, the office, like votes, is important, but fundamental to them both is the right spirit and public opinion in a community.

But the educated man can do something more than try to fashion public opinion. He can take an active part in politics, see that registration and enrolment, the first thing in the course of events leading to election, is properly and honestly conducted. He can see to it that the primary election is not merely a choice between two poor candidates, but a choice between two strong, capable, and public-spirited men. Moreover, after the primary he can take an active part in the campaign until election day, take an active part in some political club, keep a lookout on the action of his representative in state and nation, expressing to them his opinion from time to time.

But even after election there is still the responsibility of the minority to keep before the public the ideals and aims which, though temporarily defeated, are to be striven for all the more zealously, the more it seems

desirable to realize them. Only through such persistence will good men be chosen and right measures be adopted, although it is neither for measures nor men that citizens should participate in politics, but because it is right for all to pay attention to public affairs, and necessary if the American government is to be a democracy in reality.

The Social Gospel and Spirituality

The danger of submerging the spiritual and supernatural aspects of the gospel in the rising tide of social religion is emphasized by the Rev. Egerton Swann in the July issue of the *Interpreter*. The utmost insistence upon the social bearings of the gospel, he writes, need in no way conflict with the intensest appreciation of personal religion and personal conversion. To minimize the primary importance of these is to destroy the strongest inspiration of social enthusiasm. Spiritual religion that deliberately turns a deaf ear to the cry for social justice must mean hypocrisy (however unconscious). Social enthusiasm that is not inspired by a constant vision of the Eternal must mean secularism.

While the new social emphasis, then, should not be discouraged, its materialistic tendencies should be exposed and fought. The social impulse is the corollary of the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Christianity, therefore, is only secondarily, not primarily, humanitarian. To minimize the supernaturalism of the gospel is to destroy the strongest inspiration toward social reform. It is a great mistake to substitute an economic gospel for the gospel of Christ. The social reformer, by such a line, weakens the true force of his perfectly legitimate appeal to the driving power of religion. Christianity must have something to say on all questions concerning our

political, economic, and industrial relations with our fellow-men. That cannot be a true interpretation of the gospel which proclaims a formal divorce between these matters and religion.

True religion, then, must involve the setting-up of the kingdom of God on earth. What is the value of any so-called spirituality which can be in any way separated from righteousness in the fullest sense? The demand for drastic social reform is a matter of fundamental righteousness. The present distribution of wealth—Park Lane and the slums side by side within the same community—obviously cannot be justified on Christian principles. If Christianity is true, we are brethren, and our aggregate income is a family income. Yet one home gets a hundred thousand pounds a year, and another gets less than a pound a week.

The present position of the rich, and even of the moderately well-to-do, is in itself wholly wrong from a Christian point of view. The most besetting sin of these classes, taken as a whole, is their acquiescence in the anti-Christian state of things which gives them their comfort and ascendancy. Now, if the church (as at present she does as a body) simply acquiesces in this state of affairs; if she turns a blind eye to the fundamental wrong; she necessarily encourages and fosters in the well-to-do a fundamental hypocrisy which is none the less soul-destroying for being unconscious. And with what face can she preach to the poor? The awakened portion of the proletariat are quite right, as things are, in the contempt which they feel for what they regard as the hypocrisy of the church.

The present system is radically un-Christian in its whole method of working. It is not fair to blame too severely individuals who offend in various ways involved in the system itself. We are all every day taking part in wielding an enormous mass of state coercion which sanctions, in the last resort, all our accepted social methods and

keeps in effective existence our present property arrangements. So far, therefore, as we acquiesce, we are all of us every day wielding this wholesale compulsion in order to exclude from adequate access to the means of life the great majority of the people.

Religion always seeks to make the best of any environment. But there comes a time when it can no longer be restrained within the limits of a certain social environment. Then the surging tide bursts the barriers and makes new channels. When the strain of incompatibility between religion and social institutions becomes too great, religion is bound, for self-preservation, to become revolutionary. Such a point has evidently been reached today.

But religion, in becoming revolutionary, must remain religious.

The Social Ideal of Saint Paul

The notion prevails in many quarters that Paul is thoroughly individualistic, has no social teaching, is therefore without a vital message for men and women of the present age. But C. P. McClelland, writing in the *Methodist Review* (bi-monthly) for July-August, is convinced that Paul had a vivid conception of the solidarity of the human race and looked upon all men as brothers, anticipating the time when all men everywhere should be living in perfect social relations.

Of course, Paul's method of attaining his ideal was not that of modern evolutionary sociologists. Beginning with God and revelation, the great apostle argues that, because God is what he is and because of the existing relation between God and man, men should therefore so live as to fulfil the divine purpose for humanity. That is, society is degenerate because men live apart from God. Reconciliation to God, therefore, carries with it the corollary of right relations between man and man.

Yet the practical portions of the Pauline

epistles should not be underestimated. For while Paul regarded reconciliation to God and escape from the deserved consequences of sin as fundamental in salvation, he nevertheless insisted in addition thereto that all one's religious professions and experiences would be unavailing unless one *lived* in right relations with one's fellow-men. Christians must not divorce the two co-ordinate principles of profession and practice.

In brief, Paul's ideal for society is that its members shall be "in Christ," perfect in character and conduct, a truth emphasized by him under the figure of the connection that exists between the head and the members of the human body. With Paul humanity was an organism and his thought included every man. His social ideal is definite and teleological, with the mystical union of Christ and the members of the Christian society as its dynamic.

We moderns do not need a better ideal but a much more determined effort than ever before by all Christians for the realization and consummation of that in which the Christian society is universal and in which "there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all."

A Plea for Unemployables

Under the above title Rev. Arthur Dale, in the July *Hibbert Journal*, calls for a new prophet to meet present social conditions. There is a great army of unemployables, men and women who are neglected in normal times but who come forth from their hiding-places whenever there is a strike or labor disorganization of any sort. Then there are the tramps, a constant procession from one place to another. These classes are being recruited from the youth of the towns and cities and constitute a danger to themselves and a blight on modern civilization.

A serious effort should be made to get

rid of these unemployables as a class, for they are largely the victims of preventable evil conditions not made by themselves. Some years ago the late General Booth made an appeal on behalf of the submerged tenth of darkest England but failed to give the world the solution of the problem, his failure being due apparently to the overlooking of other than moral elements. Socialism was next promulgated by Blatchford as the one means of getting rid of the under dog, but the weakness of socialism has been its utter lack of recognition of any moral element in the struggle.

The tramp problem may be suggested as the key to the situation. Modern civilization rests upon the presence of destitute men, who through force of circumstances become strike breakers. Let the state undertake to find work and wages for all who will apply for them. Moreover, let those so applying be put under daily drill and discipline as soldiers are, until work can be found for them.

But even this experiment would need the support of higher ideals among the people. Men at large must be brought to see that "the best individual is he who gives of his best to the community, and the best community is that which sees that all its members are in a state of efficiency, of comfort, and of wealth."

The New Mysticism

The present religious disintegration may seem to suggest that humanity is drifting into non-religion, but Dr. J. W. Buckham, in an article in the July *Homiletic Review* bearing the above title, points out that on the contrary there is a reconstruction of social Christianity going on. There is renewed interest just now in historic mysticism, it must be admitted, but that is only an indication of a search for something deeper, something that will take away uncertainty of soul and furnish an indubitable sense of certainty.

Must the modern man, then, look for this boon to the mysticism of the past with all that was adventitious in it? Rather, may not mysticism be so restated in terms of an individual experience of spiritual truth and culture of the soul by self-dedication in love as to reveal both the insufficiency of the old order and the power and promise of the new? And again, what need of the present age will this new mysticism be competent to satisfy?

The spirit of the new mysticism will be able to unify modern life now so sorely torn by diverse interests. People of today are living under the tyranny of over-civilization in a world of such complexity and externalism that they are in danger of losing their self-identity. The only way of escape from this externalism is to enter into the spirit life, where one finds true selfhood and whence one can emerge to make the outer life serve and embody the life of the spirit.

Again, the new can give what the older lacked, freedom and fulness. For the modern mystic can be true to his ideal and yet swing out into the fuller tide of life. So it was with the many-sided mystic Phillips Brooks, whose life was so out-reaching and varied in its activities and sympathies. In like manner the mystical, winsome life of Alice Freeman Palmer may be mentioned, so abundant in the wealth of its human interests and influences. So also was Dr. Grenfell, the friend of a forsaken people to whom he brought both material and spiritual good, both a student and lover of the Bible and at the same time able to plan for the social and economic betterment of the people he so devotedly served.

The mystics still abound in the midst of modern life and while much of the mysticism of today is still colored by an incongruous individualism, yet underneath there is a current of sane reality giving greater freedom to the life it lights. "For mysticism is in

its very nature expansive. It enlarges the soul vertically, and, when blended with intellectual strength, education, and culture, horizontally as well."

The Charity of the Poor

Under the title, "Hidden Resources," Madeleine Sweeny Miller, in the *Surve*y for July 26, calls attention to a charity among the poor which is synonymous with self-denial. There is no display, no bidding for approval in this generosity, but simple, cheerful giving stripped of all aspect of philanthropy.

In the mill district of Pittsburgh there is a mothers' club, meeting once a month or so for a social evening. Sometimes the entertainment provided by the Settlement Auxiliary Board fails. Then these mothers are content to play the simple games of children. Sometimes they make garments and various articles for the sales of the Settlement House to help make the running expenses, and these hard-working women seem especially delighted to have the opportunity of thus occasionally helping the institution which has meant so much to their community in the substitution of men's clubs and Boy Scout divisions for the saloons.

Moreover, genuine sacrifice is sometimes seemingly an experience of joy to them, as was shown in the delight of an Italian family when its little present of four nickels and a dime on the occasion of the wedding of a certain minister who had befriended the family was gratefully accepted, though the recipient of the humble gift realized that it must have cost the givers a few meals perhaps, or something else just as necessary.

But the "hidden resources of the poor" came to light in a still more beautiful manner when these same destitute people were called upon to mourn the loss of the wife's sister and to take into their own already crowded home the sister's three stricken children. But "when the minister went

to see her, the little woman, her face as sweet as a Botticelli Madonna, smilingly remarked as she nursed her sister's child, 'Yes, we be having a hard time just now, but Luigi says they'll all be grown up some-day, and then *they'll help us.*'"

Education and Irreligion

The *Christian Advocate*, of recent issue, calls attention to some disturbing figures of the proportion of educated young people in Christian churches. Out of a recent large graduating class in a prominent university only one member recorded himself as a regular attendant at chapel, while fifty-two acknowledged that they never attended the campus chapel service. Eight declared themselves without religion.

Disturbing as such figures are, however, they do not necessarily mean that too much education is being provided for young people today, as some are inclined to assert, but that the present emphasis upon training in religion is insufficient. Or again, such figures may mean simply that many college-bred youths are entering various fields of social service which they possibly consider legitimate substitutes for public worship.

The church will be wise, however, if it recognizes that abstinence from religious observances because of such a misconception will be but temporary. For the fact is that our people never before showed such moral earnestness as is in evidence today in philanthropic and humanitarian work. This zeal for service must be conserved and to it must be added a stronger religious impulse.

And here the institutions of learning have a great opportunity. They need still more to emphasize religion as a part of training, and the church should aid in this by hailing with enthusiasm the movement to bring Christian pastors into close contact with the student bodies of secular institutions and by insisting that the denominational colleges shall intensify the religious element in their curricula.

Do Protestants Begin Too Late in Denominational Education?

Professor Benjamin A. Greene, in the August educational number of the *Standard*, comments on the object-lesson afforded by the crowds surging out of Roman Catholic church edifices Sunday mornings, while Protestant workers wonder where the faithful are, and then asks the question, Do Protestants begin too late in denominational education? Whatever may be thought of the way in which the Roman Catholic church practices the teaching of the ecclesiastical axiom, "hover the child in its earlier years and the church will win loyal adherents," Protestants may well ask, even in view of modern diversified endeavor in the way of Sunday school, young people's society, Boy Scouts and Campfire Girls, whether they are really and efficiently meeting the complex situation out of which the question arises. Shall not rather the question be, Do Protestants begin with themselves?

For Protestantism with all its excellence is exposed to grave dangers. Emphasizing the individual, his direct access to God, the possibility of living the religious life anywhere, and worshipping God in groves as well as temples made by man, Protestant parents are apt to forget that while they themselves may not falter in their hold on God their children may grow up with lax notions about the church and religion, and while isolated men may do without the church the family and society cannot.

Another danger in Protestantism is to be found in the drawing together of the various denominations. Once controversy and antagonism prevailed and denominational peculiarities were put foremost. This had its dark side and people are generally glad that the Protestant religious world is growing away from this condition and that co-operation and union are taking place. But just in this good thing there may be danger in the undervaluing of conviction and in

causing social convenience to be put for personal religious conviction. Thus children may grow up in a religious atmosphere that is not genuinely interested in the fountal sources of religion and the tendency will be to think of the church as less important, if indeed as not at all essential.

The question, then, is where, not when. Let loyalty to the church begin in the home. Let it include the Bible school and its educational work. Let parents co-operate with the pastor when he seeks to bring children into the church. "And once within, they

should find spiritual hovering; bending forms with benediction, kind words, genial faces, everyday saints showing them the noble, glad, and holy way to live. If we have this, this initial, early flow of parental, God-inspired influence in example, conversation, and instruction, added to all the pedagogic methods which we now possess, beginning with the cradle roll and ending with the adult Bible class, we shall find ourselves far and away beyond the perplexing situation indicated by the question at the head of this article."

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

MISSIONS

A Missionary Opportunity for Students

Under the above title in the August *Missionary Review of the World*, George W. Hollister calls attention to the need for Christian social reformers in the non-Christian world. If it be asked, What has Christianity to do with social evils in a non-Christian country? the answer is that the social life of a people is the result of the religion of the masses, and as the great "world religions" have not only failed to produce any great measure of practical morality but have even, at least in some cases, fostered immorality, there are social evils in those lands today which are threatening the individual life, the home life, and the mass life of the nations and which Christianity has shown itself able to remedy. For "it gives the individual power to subdue passion. It outlaws intemperance and impurity. It has made of the home one of the most sacred institutions the world has ever known. It honors marriage and makes the marriage vow sacred. . . . Education

follows in its footsteps. Ignorance and falsehood vanish before its light."

Now since Christianity has been able to adapt itself so wonderfully to the changing social needs of a great people in this country, it can in the same way meet the social evils of the non-Christian world due to modern civilization. Since, moreover, college graduates are men and women of intellectual and moral strength and of great character, they are best fitted to satisfy the claims for a broad and strong type of Christianity.

There are, again, several forces which emphasize this call of the non-Christian world to the educated young people of this country. Among these is humanity's demand for the blotting out of these evils. The world has become knit together in this generation and there is today a society of nations. Each nation tends either to elevate the others or drag them down. This makes it necessary for Christianity to meet the social evils on the foreign field. The impelling power of our American Christianity is also a force urging the educated to